

21st July 2025

Dear Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP,

Pay differentials between NCA officers and Police officers

Thank you for inviting me to give evidence to the Business and Trade Sub-Committee on Economic Security, Arms and Export Controls on Tuesday 8th July 2025. The sessions covered useful ground and I hope will have been of interest to the Committee.

You will have seen in the media last week that we arrested four people in relation to the cyber-attacks on Marks and Spencer, Co-Op and Harrods. Whilst our investigation continues, I cannot comment further than to confirm those arrests in this letter. However, I hope this action demonstrates the Agency's continued intent to target the actors we believe to be responsible for the incidents discussed during our evidence session.

During the session, I offered to write to you concerning the pay differentials between NCA Officers and Police Officers. It is only right that I highlight from the outset that the NCA is a Non-Ministerial Department of the Civil Service, rather than a police force. As such, we are subject to different pay parameters than our policing colleagues.

Policing, in common with many public sector employers, increase employees' pay in addition to annual cost-of-living pay rises, until the employees pay reaches the top of their pay range; NCA follows Civil Service practice in not doing so. For example, Police Officers progress to the top of their pay ranges within 2-6 years provided they remain at the same grade. Some 70% of NCA Officers on the standard pay range are at or very near the bottom of their pay ranges, with no movement beyond any annual pay award. Even for the third of the Agency's workforce on 'Spot Rates' of pay (defined quantities of additional salary to acknowledge competence in role or difficulty in recruitment and retention for that role) are paid less than policing comparators; all of these Spot Rates, at every grade, are many thousands of pounds lower than equivalent Police median pay, let alone Police pay range maxima which all police reach in a short period of time.

The uncompetitive nature of NCA's offer, versus the offer in policing, is made worse as NCA's contracts require either a 37 or 40 hour working week without paid breaks whereas police have a 36.25 hour working week when paid breaks are included.

As I mentioned during the session, the Agency needs its pay arrangements to be able to attract talent from policing, Civil Service and elsewhere with an offer of the high-end work essential to protect the public from serious and organised crime. However, NCA Officers are comparatively underpaid for many types of roles against policing comparators.

The table below¹ shows the median pay gap between an NCA Officer and their policing equivalent since the formation of the NCA in 2013. The data is derived by taking all salaries

¹ Omitted grades and years show a similar trend; the full table is annexed if you would like the full detail.



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paid to NCA Officers at a given grade, taking the median value and comparing that to the median value of salaries paid to all Police Officers at that equivalent grade. In all cases, the gross amount an NCA Officer receives is lower than their Policing equivalent.

Rank	Chief Superintendent/ NCA Grade 1	Chief Inspector / NCA Grade 3	Constable / NCA Grade 5
2024	£29,680	£11,295	£7,743
2022	£21,166	£11,684	£6,995
2020	£21,164	£15,252	£7,167
2018	£18,028	£12,613	£6,508
2016	£17,179	£11,321	£9,963
2014	£8,603	£8,979	£8,221

There is a clear gap between salaries the Agency can offer compared to policing counterparts, which is primarily due to the lack of pay progression offered by the NCA to Officers based on time served in role.

Due to these pay differences with policing, NCA has considerable difficulties recruiting Police Officers directly from police forces, except at the point of retirement. The fact we do see a number of retired Police Officers joining the Agency to supplement their police pension demonstrates that the Agency can attract this cohort when the offer is about our work rather than our salary offer.

The pay gap is larger at more senior grades (see NCA Grade 1 above). These officers are likely to have served more time in role and have not benefited from pay progression.

There is also a pay differential in location allowances. I've included a table below which shows the different location allowances for NCA Officers and policing colleagues in London and the South East for this year:

Location Allowances – Force	London Weighting	London Allowance 1	London Allowance 2	South East Allowance
NCA	£4,040			£3,232
City of London Police	£8,362			
Met Police	£2,886*	£1,011*	£4,327*	
Bedfordshire Police				£1,500
Essex Police				£3,000
Hampshire Police				£2,000
Hertfordshire Police				£3,000
Kent Police				£3,000
Surrey Police				£3,000
Sussex Police				£2,000
Thames Valley Police				£3,000
Ministry of Defence Police	£3,024**		£4,338**	£2,000 - £3,000

*MPS officers will receive the total of all three allowances.

**MOD Police working with Whitehall will receive the total of both London allowances.

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NCA Officers receive a greater South East Allowance when compared with policing colleagues in forces outside of London, but this amount of additional allowance does little to offset the overall salary discrepancy. When compared to officers' salaries in both City of London Police and Metropolitan Police, who receive London Weighting, NCA Officers are in receipt of less than half the location allowance as well as lower salaries.

We are working with Home Office and other Government Departments to revise the Agency's pay and contract offer by developing a cost neutral business case to address these problems and facilitate the recruitment and retention we need to fulfil our mission of protecting the public from serious and organised crime. This plan is supported by Home Office and we will be seeking HMT permission to implement it in the Autumn.

Yours sincerely,



James Babbage

Director General Threats



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Annex 1 – Full table of NCA/Police pay differentials

Rank	Chief Superintendent/ NCA Grade 1	Superintendent / NCA Grade 2	Chief Inspector / NCA Grade 3	Sergeant / NCA Grade 4	Constable / NCA Grade 5
2024	£29,680	£24,449	£11,295	£6,633	£7,743
2023	£25,683	£23,489	£10,905	£6,441	£7,484
2022	£21,166	£19,061	£11,684	£6,020	£6,995
2021	£19,180	£16,701	£15,252	£6,018	£8,358
2020	£21,164	£21,951	£15,252	£6,018	£7,167
2019	£22,293	£19,927	£13,972	£5,262	£7,461
2018	£18,028	£18,667	£12,613	£3,983	£6,508
2017	£19,064	£16,710	£12,187	£4,193	£6,927
2016	£17,179	£15,223	£11,321	£5,491	£9,963
2015	£17,010	£14,913	£10,087	£4,320	£8,650
2014	£8,603	£10,967	£8,979	£3,816	£8,221

